

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 2798

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring legible prescriptions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on (originally sponsored by Representatives Lambert, Campbell, Cody, Parlette, Kagi, Benson and Haigh).

House Committee on Health Care
Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care

Background:

There are expressed concerns about the legibility of prescriptions issued by some prescribing health care practitioners that can lead to errors in filling prescriptions. These errors can, and have, resulted in risks to the health and safety of patients.

There is no law requiring prescriptions to be legible.

Summary of Bill:

There is a legislative finding that illegibly written drug orders are factors in medical mistakes, and account for over 100,000 deaths annually in the nation. Data suggests that over 25 percent of medical errors result from mistakes in writing prescriptions.

A prescription for a legend drug must be legible. A legible prescription means a prescription or medical order issued by a practitioner that is capable of being read and understood by the pharmacist filling the prescription or the nurse or other practitioner implementing the medication order.

The Department of Health is directed to develop recommendations on methods for reducing medication errors, including legibility, prescription drug labeling, medication error reporting, the use of automated drug-ordering systems, and increasing patient awareness. Recommendations must be submitted to the legislature by December 31, 2000.

Votes on Final Passage:

House 78 19
Senate 43 4

Effective: June 8, 2000